

NORTH COAST DRAFT MARINE PLAN: SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the North Coast Marine Plan (the plan) is to provide recommendations for achieving a sustainable balance between ecosystem health, social and cultural well-being and economic development through an ecosystem-based approach to planning and management. The draft plan provides direction for managing common First Nation and provincial interests related to marine areas, uses and activities within provincial government jurisdiction. The plan is informed by First Nations strategic marine use plans and provincial priorities.

Partners

The North Coast draft Marine Plan was prepared by the Province of British Columbia (Province), as represented by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and the North Coast – Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society (NCSFNSS), representing the Metlakatla, Kitsumkalum, Kitselas, Haisla, Gitga'at, and Gitxaala Nations.

This plan was prepared as part of the Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (MaPP) initiative, whose partners are the provincial government and 18 member First Nations, which are represented by three First Nations organizations: the Coastal First Nations Great Bear Initiative, the North Coast–Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society, and the Nanwakolas Council.

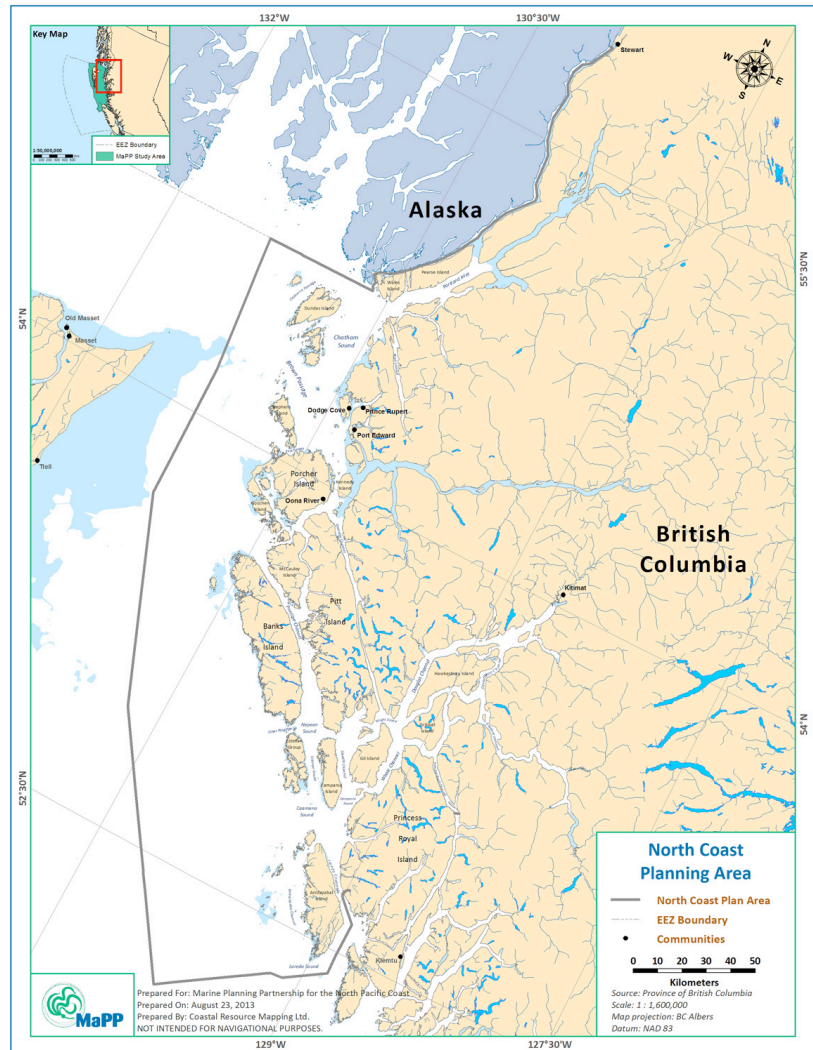


Figure 1: North Coast Plan Area

Sub-regional marine plans have been developed for Haida Gwaii, the North Coast, the Central Coast, and Northern Vancouver Island.

Plan Area

The North Coast plan area (Figure 1) covers 27,000 km of coastline that is indented with deep fjords and dotted with thousands of islands. It is a region of profound beauty, significant ecological diversity and remarkable cultural richness. Prince Rupert, Terrace and Kitimat are the largest communities in the North Coast plan area, which supports an overall population of approximately 42,000. The coastal boundaries of two regional districts are within the plan area: Kitimat–Stikine and Skeena–Queen Charlotte.

The physical complexity of the North Coast includes a range of ecosystem types, including important estuaries that support distinct marine ecosystems and species. A diverse range of economic and community activities occur within the North Coast plan area. Commercial fisheries and associated processing facilities and logging have supported communities along the coast since the early 1900s. These activities continue to be important to the well-being of coastal communities. Port activities centered around the communities of Prince Rupert, Kitimat and Stewart, and active recreational fishing and tourism sectors, continue to be strong economic drivers in the area. North Coast First Nations living in the region have distinct cultural and spiritual heritages that are intricately linked to the marine environment and the long-standing sustainable use and management of marine resources.

Scope

This draft plan is focused on the marine areas and uses where, as between the Government of British Columbia and Government of Canada, the Government of British Columbia has legal jurisdiction and regulatory authority, namely the foreshore (i.e., the intertidal zone), coastal “inland waters” on the outer coast, and the lands covered by these waters.

First Nations laws and traditions hold the Nations responsible for ensuring that natural and cultural heritage of their territories is passed on to future generations. Similar to land use plans, the marine plan seeks to develop a framework, for the future, for joint, shared and collaborative management of marine and coastal areas around the North Coast.

The plan does not provide, imply direction or make recommendations of matters that the Province believes are solely within federal jurisdiction.

PLANNING PROCESS, APPROACH AND INFORMATION SOURCES

The draft plan brings together science and Aboriginal knowledge, input from the technical staff of NCSFNSS (representing the Gitga’at, Gitxaala, Metlakatla, Kitsumkalum, Kitselas and Haisla Nations) and the Province. Key information and direction was provided by First Nations strategic marine use plans and existing provincial planning and policy documents.

Ecological, cultural and social and economic data sources were compiled and analysed by the joint technical team and contract support. Relevant background scientific reports and technical documents from the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA) process were also used, along with the BC Marine Conservation Analysis. Additional information was drawn from government reports and publications, academic literature, industry or sector publications, discussions with experts and local knowledge. Advice was also incorporated from the North Coast Marine Plan Advisory Committee and public and stakeholder engagement.

The MaPP planning process uses a marine ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach, which is consistent with First Nations' resource management approaches and with provincial government direction in resource management. EBM is built on principles of ecological integrity, human well-being, and governance and collaborative management. It recognizes the impacts of interactions in an ecosystem and places human activities and impacts into the ecosystem management framework. Management direction for EBM is incorporated into all of the objectives and strategies in the draft plan.

NORTH COAST MARINE PLAN CONTENT

The plan has three main sections:

- 1. General Management Direction** provides policy guidance through objectives and strategies. This provides a blueprint for achieving positive change and reinforces our approach to conservation, stewardship and healthy coastal communities.
- 2. Spatial Zoning** describes our approach to managing marine uses through boundaries on the water. This section of the plan contains maps and designates areas for protection, general use and special use.
- 3. Plan Implementation, Monitoring and Amendment** describes how we will move forward with the plan and how changes can be made once the plan is approved.

Each of the sections of the plan is described in the pages that follow. Note that the North Coast Marine Plan is draft and is being provided for the purpose of public review and discussion. As such, the draft plan is subject to change and final review and approval by the NCSFNSS member and partner Nations and the Province.

1. General Management Direction

The draft plan consists of three overarching themes and 15 topic-specific management components for which general management direction is provided. For each component, objectives and strategies are identified to address specific issues. Refer to **Sections 3 and 4** of the draft plan for details.

Overarching Themes

Theme	Management Objectives
Governance	<p>In the context of this plan, governance includes the regulatory and management authorities, activities and decision-making processes associated with marine areas, resources, uses and activities. North Coast plan objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen existing or create new relationships to facilitate collaborative ocean governance • Develop governance structures to implement marine plans • Improve consultation processes regarding marine territories
Cumulative Effects Assessment	<p>A cumulative effects assessment (CEA) considers the extent to which individual actions or events cause stress on valued components of social and economic and/or biophysical systems. A marine CEA assessment framework is being developed for the MaPP study area. This will allow cumulative impacts of both terrestrial and marine uses and activities to be assessed in a compatible manner. North Coast plan objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory and evaluate existing data sets to identify gaps and required studies • Conduct thorough baseline studies to complement existing data and facilitate the identification and monitoring of cumulative effects • Collaboratively identify potential impacts and thresholds • Collaboratively develop cumulative effects prevention and mitigation strategies • Collaboratively monitor for cumulative effects in order to trigger management actions for prevention and mitigation
Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation	<p>A strong, credible body of scientific evidence shows that climate change, caused largely by human activities, is occurring and that it presents significant risks for a broad range of human and natural systems. It is believed that climate change will lead to regional and localized effects that will have ecological, economic, and social consequences for the North Coast. North Coast plan objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and manage for ecological changes due to climate change • Prepare and manage for impacts to cultural and social and economic changes due to climate change • Contribute to provincial, regional and local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions • Work collaboratively to monitor and adapt to changes in fisheries and aquaculture systems due to climate change • Reduce community vulnerability to climate change impacts and support community resilience

Topic Specific Themes

Theme	Management Objectives
Compliance and Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance capacity for surveillance, compliance and enforcement Strengthen marine-based compliance and enforcement by expanding collaborative relationships Improve awareness of, and adherence to, marine regulations among marine user groups
Monitoring and Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen marine-based monitoring and stewardship through enhancing capacity and expanding collaborative relationships Support the coordinated and effective collection of marine data by government agencies, First Nations, industry, and other marine users Support the analysis and use of monitoring data in order to better manage marine resources and activities
Marine Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Canada-BC-First Nations MPA network planning process propose candidate areas for a Marine Protected Area network. Protect important ecological components that are not or cannot be protected through an MPA network Protect habitat for species valued for high ecosystem and cultural significance Protect important cultural components and First Nations values that are not or cannot be protected through an MPA network
Marine Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize and mitigate ecological impacts of marine pollution from human activities and infrastructure in marine areas Improve habitat around priority areas that have been impacted by marine-related activities
Marine Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve available information and data sharing agreements to protect important social, cultural, ecological and economic areas Develop Geographic Response Plans for the North Coast Ensure systems are in place and sufficient personnel are trained and available to respond Ensure sufficient funds are available in the North Coast for planning, response and recovery activities Ensure sufficient marine safety and response capacity
General Tenures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support relationship building between tenure proponents and First Nations Improve clarity of tenuring and regulatory policies for new tenured operations
Marine Based Renewable Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase First Nations and local community economic benefits from marine renewables energy activities Promote the viability of the marine renewable energy sector on the North Coast Identify, minimize and mitigate impacts of marine-based renewable energy projects
Shellfish and Marine Plant Aquaculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize and mitigate the negative ecological impacts from aquaculture activities Increase First Nations and local community economic benefits from shellfish and marine plant aquaculture activities Protect First Nations uses and values from the impacts of aquaculture activities
Forestry Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance local understanding of a viable and sustainable log handling industry Minimize and mitigate ecological impacts of logging-related activities in marine areas

Theme	Management Objectives
Tourism and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for appropriate tourism development in the North Coast • Ensure sufficient recreation and tourism monitoring and enforcement structures are in place • Minimize and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and recreation activities • Assess opportunities for marine tourism and encourage local tourism development
Marine Fisheries Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase local economic benefit from sustainable fishing activities • Establish collaborative structures and relationships to enhance fisheries sustainability and viability • Improve the infrastructure required by marine fisheries • Increase local skill development and capacity in fishery-related activities • Protect and improve understanding of Aboriginal fisheries • Increase First Nations and local community access to marine resources • Minimize and mitigate the negative ecological impacts to fish habitat.
Marine Economy and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage an ecosystem-based approach to marine sector strategic economic plans • Create more stable and sustainable First Nations and local community marine-based economies • Increase First Nations participation in the marine economy
Heritage Sites and First Nations Cultural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document and inventory North Coast cultural resources and archaeological sites in a manner that recognizes data sensitivity • Protect heritage resources and archaeological sites through site planning and management • Protect heritage resources and archaeological sites through enhancing engagement with tenure proponents • Protect heritage resources and archaeological sites through public awareness • Enhance the benefits and minimize and mitigate the negative impacts of archaeological, cultural and natural history research activities
First Nations' Resource Use and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with section 35(1) of the Constitution Act 1982, protect First Nations use of territories and resources for community benefit. • Protect First Nations ability to govern, manage and enhance resources through Aboriginal laws and practices • Enhance First Nations opportunities for cultural education • Enhance First Nations food security

2. North Coast Spatial Zoning

The designation of marine space into discrete zones is a common component of integrated ocean and marine plans. The zoning direction helps determine areas that may contribute to North Coast and regional marine protection networks, as well identifies areas where special management provisions and conditions are to be applied. This practice is consistent with strategic land use planning in B.C., which allocates space to specific zones to alleviate competition and conflict and/or identify priority uses and values.

Spatial zones developed through the MaPP initiative will not necessarily become legally designated areas where activities are regulated by legislation. The zones and associated management direction included in this plan are intended to provide policy direction for marine and coastal resource management decision-makers and marine user groups. Over time, the zones may be legally designated through appropriate legislation.

As part of the North Coast MaPP marine planning process, North Coast-Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society member and partner Nations and the Province have developed recommended spatial zones, including Special Management Zones and Protection Management Zones. All remaining areas outside of these management zones are within the General Management Zone.

The North Coast Marine Plan has three overarching zone types with recommended use and activities:

- **General Management Zone (GMZ)** – supports a wide range of compatible and sustainable marine uses and activities associated with public, private and community uses using an ecosystem-based management framework
- **Special Management Zone (SMZ)** – allocated space for high priority and/or high potential sustainable marine uses and activities, including economic development and/or cultural uses and activities that require specific environmental conditions or locations. The SMZ includes four sub-zones:
 - **Shellfish and Marine Plant Aquaculture Sub-zone** (management intent: emphasis on the growth and development of the shellfish aquaculture industry; First Nation traditional uses and practices for food, social and ceremonial purposes continue)
 - **Recreation and Tourism Sub-zone** (management intent: ecosystem-based recreation and tourism activities and uses; First Nation traditional uses and practices continue)
 - **Renewable Energy Sub-zone** (management intent: emphasis on the growth and development of the renewable energy industry; First Nation traditional uses and practices continue)
 - **Cultural Sub-zone** (management intent: continued First Nation’s marine resource use and access to cultural resources and activities, especially those for spiritual, social, food and fibre harvest, educational and ceremonial purposes, without interference from other groups. Other activities may be acceptable if they do not negatively impact food security, damage or alter the cultural resource or ecological systems)
- **Protection Management Zone (PMZ)** – allocates space primarily for conservation purposes or objectives. The International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) category descriptions are used to generally align the types of protection identified in the plan. Descriptions of sub-zones can be found in [Section 5.2](#) of the North Coast draft Marine Plan.

Each of the SMZ and PMZ candidates has an accompanying table that identifies marine uses and activities that are considered acceptable, conditionally acceptable, or not acceptable within the zone.

For every identified activity that is considered conditionally acceptable, condition statements are provided.

The three overarching zone types (General Management Zone, Special Management Zone, Protection Management Zone) designated through the North Coast planning process are shown in **Figure 2**. Further details on uses and activities and management provisions and conditions for each zone may be found in **Section 5** of the plan as well as in **Appendix 3**.

Figure 3 shows the breakdown of the Protection Management Zones into high (IUCN Ib, II), medium (IUCN IV) and low (IUCN V) protection levels.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation will involve the creation of a technical coordinating body that is assigned to guide and oversee the implementation process. This technical coordinating body will be comprised of representatives from the Province and member First Nations. A joint Terms of Reference will clearly outline the roles, scope of responsibilities, and engagement schedule. Organization and structure is currently under discussion.

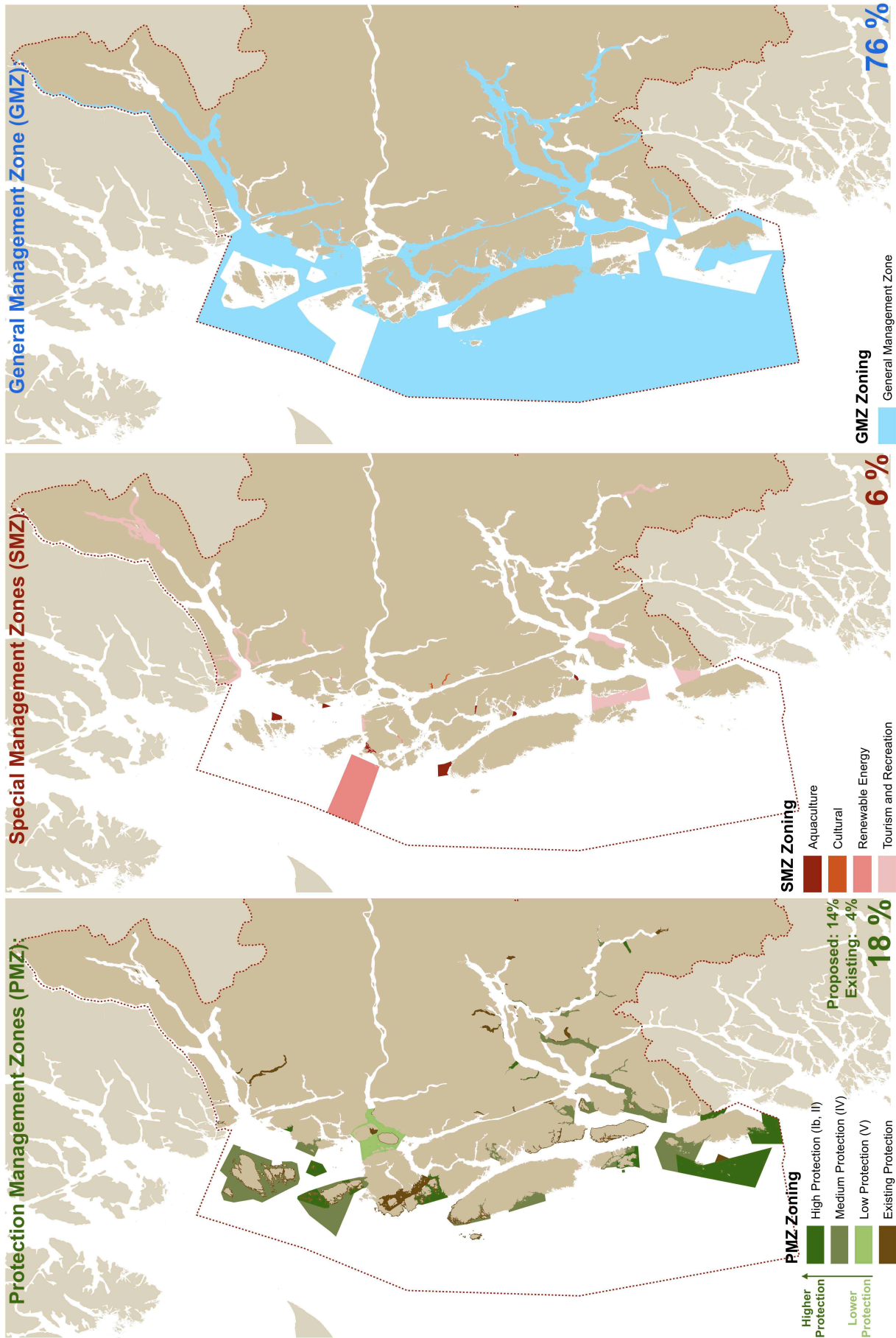
While all of the strategies identified in the plan are important elements of an integrated EBM approach for North Coast waters, priorities will be identified to set the course for immediate or short-term implementation of the plan. The goal is to implement all strategies over the longer term, as funding and other resources permit. Continued collaboration and integration will be essential as work is conducted on all plan strategies.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Marine Planning Partnership: <http://mappocean.org/>

North Coast draft Marine Plan: <http://mappocean.org/north-coast/draft-plan-for-input/>

We want to hear your thoughts on the draft plan. For information on the public meetings and ways to provide feedback please see <http://mappocean.org/>

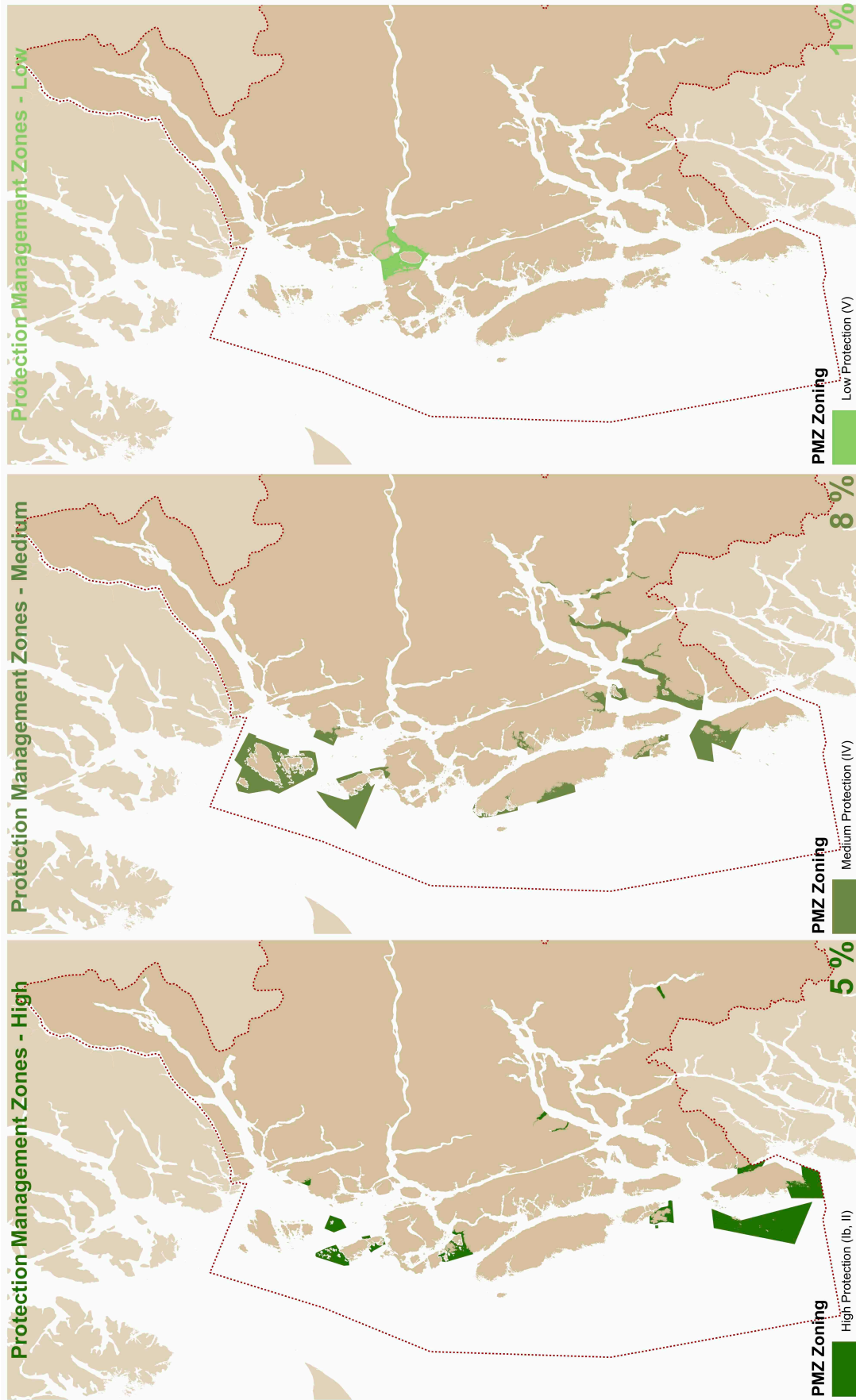


Areas where the full range of sustainable marine uses and activities may occur, subject to existing legislation and policy.

Areas particularly well-suited to specific sustainable marine uses and activities.

Areas managed to conserve natural values. There are three levels of conservation focus for these zones: High (strong emphasis on natural values), Medium (focus primarily on specific species and ecosystems), and Low (mix of conservation and sustainable human uses).

Figure 2 North Coast Zoning Summary Map



Areas that have sensitive ecological values but are also important for sustainable human uses and activities, often in proximity of population centres. Fewer restrictions on marine uses however, management plans are required to achieve conservation objectives.

Compatible activities may include: marine plant and shellfish aquaculture, anchorages, float homes/lodges, marine infrastructure, log storage/handling, research, and public and commercial recreation and tourism.

Areas primarily identified to protect particular species or habitats. A range of extractive and non-extractive activities can occur provided they do not impact the conservation objectives for each zone. Compatible activities may include: scientific research, public and commercial recreation and tourism, anchorages, small scale infrastructure (e.g. docks, boat ramps).

Areas of highest conservation value with an emphasis on protecting marine species, ecosystems and ecological processes in their natural state. These areas have significant ecological values, including rare or threatened species or ecosystems. They may also represent marine ecosystem types.

Limited activities can occur in these areas provided they do not impact the conservation objectives of each zone. Compatible activities may include: scientific research and non-extractive public and commercial recreation and tourism. Extractive uses are generally not compatible with the values of these PMZs.

Figure 3 North Coast Protection Management Zones: High, medium and low.